

THE

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

No. 9.

SEPTEMBER, 1816.

Vol. IV.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF MADAM MARY KING.

MADAM MARY KING, the subject of this memoir, was the wife of Richard King, Esq. of Scarborough, by *his* second marriage, and a daughter of Mr. Samuel Black, of York, Massachusetts. She was born October 8, 1736. Her character, while under parental government, the writer has no means of ascertaining: of the correctness of her life, however, during her minority, no one has ever suggested a doubt. The truth of this fact we the more readily presume, from the fruits she exhibited in life: for those principles of affection, benevolence, and virtue, which, at any time, distinguish mature age, are almost invariably imbibed and cherished in youth.

On the 19th of October, 1759, 'Sabella, the former wife of Mr. King, was removed by death. From this marriage originated *Rufus King*, a bright and well known ornament of his country; and two daughters, Mary, wife of Robert Southgate, Esq. of Scarborough; and Paulina, wife of Dr. Aaron Porter, of Portland. Mr. King's second marriage was solemnized, 31st January, 1762; and the offspring of *this* marriage were, Richard King, of Scarbo-

rough; 'Sabella, who died September 12, 1770, aged six years and four days; Dorcas, wife of Joseph Leland, Esq. Saco; General William King, of Bath; Betsy, wife of Dr. Benjamin J. Porter, of Topsham; and Hon. Cyrus King, of Saco.

The conjugal state of Madam King was of short duration: at a little more than the extent of thirteen years, she was bereaved of her worthy consort. This bereavement, this calamitous sequel of immense preceding mental sufferings, she supported with great fortitude. It is not without the most painful reluctance, that a generous mind can take a retrospective view of exhibitions of human depravity, long past; but, in order to a more adequate idea of those previous mental trials which she endured, and which must render the death of her husband the more afflictive, we are here compelled to a brief narrative of certain facts, by which they were created.

The residence of Mr. King was among the then recent settlements of Maine. He was a man, we believe, of great natural good sense, and a fine understanding; and by his industry and perse-

verance in business, as a merchant or trader, he had acquired an estate of no inconsiderable value, which was accompanied with a correspondent respect and influence in society. This consideration alone, among a people, *some* of them not too replete with the finer feelings, was sufficient to excite the spirit of envy. Finding themselves, through his generosity or their own negligence, largely in his debt, this demon-ack spirit at length resulted in a combined and deeply meditated plot of levelling—*vi et armis*. Hence the property of Mr. King was, at repeated times, wantonly destroyed, his life threatened, and his whole family exposed to imminent danger: By whom? by the untutored savage of the wilderness?—No; but by men, under Christian privileges, imitating the savage! To be roused from the depth of sleep, by the hideous yell at midnight; to find their dwellings actually broken up; to hear the savage footsteps almost on the floor of their bed-chambers; to see the brandishing of the tomahawk, and the instruments of death approaching through the gleam of moonshine, must have created distress not to be described. That the mother and children did not, in a state of desperation, precipitate themselves through the windows of the house, or that some fatal act did not ensue to the father, on this dreadful moment of savage phrenzy, is attributable, under Providence, to his prudent and intrepid courage. Though the mob abundantly gratified their malignity, in sacrificing his pro-

perty by *fire*, and otherwise, yet he and his family were preserved from personal injury.

At a subsequent period, a similar spirit exhibited itself; and Mr. King was, in no small degree, the object of its rage. It is true, it appeared in the garb of patriotism; but, whether this were not a mere cloak of private revenge, assumed at a moment of civil interregnum; and whether the injuries and distresses he experienced, did not accelerate the death of Mr. King, will be determined at a future reckoning.

Madam King was a woman of the keenest sensibility, and every subsequent interview with those by whom she had been thus wounded to the quick, must have been inexpressibly distressing.—Her studious avoidance, therefore, of all intercourse with them in future, especially while no marks of contrition appeared, was not incompatible with that portion of our Master's spirit which is usually imbibed by his disciples.

At the death of Mr. King, which event took place 27th March, 1775, the care and education of the rising family devolved solely on Madam King. This important trust she sustained, and executed with great ability and affection. As the surviving head of the family, she stood with independence and dignity, and rendered herself universally respected and esteemed. Endowed by nature with a strong, discriminating mind, she conducted her affairs with deep discretion. She was indefati-

gable in business; persevering, to admiration, in executing her plans. Her ascendancy over her children was entire, and generally retained through life: this resulted from the good sense and judgment with which she exercised parental authority. Her maternal affections were peculiarly ardent. With unwearied assiduity she studied to promote the usefulness, honour, and happiness of both branches of her children; and to her forming hand is society indebted for some of its noblest and most useful members. Her own ease never became an object of a moment's attention, when placed in competition with the benefit and comfort of others. This noble, disinterested spirit, was natural, and breathed through all the acts of her life: of its fruits her children ceased not to participate, till her death: for them she lived in particular; but not for them exclusively: her benevolence was *frequently* diverted to others—to the sick, the needy, the distressed. "On her tongue dwelt the law of kindness." How many times she sacrificed her own quiet to others' wants, and to others' woes, that day will unfold, when deeds of Christian mercy shall receive their reward. Suffice it to say, that she exhibited a heart fraught with the benevolent affections, and accompanied it with a life rich in good works to all, without partiality and without hypocrisy: and she long lived to enjoy the fruits of her maternal and benevolent labours, particularly in the general useful-

ness and rising greatness of her children, and in the universal esteem and admiration of those who knew her. The smiles of Heaven upon her were conspicuous: God was faithful to perform his promises: "Leave thy fatherless children with me; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in God." We can adduce no instance wherein this declaration of Scripture has been, to the same extent, so completely verified as in that before us; for, from the death of Mr. King to that of his consort, May 28, 1816, a space of more than forty-one years, the family were continued the same as when left by the worthy and honoured husband and father.

To these remarks on the life of our friend, deceased, we are happy to add, that it was also replete with moral excellence. In her we beheld, not an occasional, inefficient talker of virtue; but an illustrious, vivifying example of it. She was a conspicuous luminary, moving, not unequally in an eccentric orbit, but uniformly in her own circle.

The paths of virtue and vice diverge at a small angle. No instance, however, occurs, in which the deceased was known to step into the latter. At the very appearance of vice, in whatever shape, her mind recoiled, or her countenance looked abhorrence. Having set her face as a flint against every species of corruption and wickedness, she could neither be allured nor betrayed herself, nor was she wanting in sounding the alarm to her friends. Seeing them al-

ready allured, or anticipating their danger, she would fly with rapidity, and with solicitude, to beseech them to retrieve and retain their integrity. And seldom, if ever, did she fail in her object; for, it would argue sensibility less than human to resist her eloquence.

The conversation of Madam King was enriched with propriety and good sense. In company she was social and friendly; equally happy in banishing impudent loquacity and sullen silence from her presence.—Though not extensively read in books, she had read the human heart; she had observed the operations and general laws of nature, and understood current events; and such were the resources of her own powerful and active mind, that no one could avoid feeling interested, improved, and delighted in her society. In her disposition she was meek, and in her views unaspiring. Worldly distinctions, without correspondent merit, presented no charms to her mind. But in characters eminent for talents, usefulness and virtue, she manifested the liveliest interest. She was a friend to the ministers of Christ; liberal, but firm, in her views of christianity; and exemplary in regarding its institutions.

Madam King was at no period wanting in her economy of time. Her children being formed into families, and established mostly in the immediate vicinity, she occasionally divided her time and maternal assistance among them, retaining the old mansion as her principal resi-

dence, till rising of three score and ten years. And the interest, facility, and success of the mother, in directing and managing the rising generation, were equally apparent in the grandmother.—But her mental powers and desire of benefiting her friends, at length began to outlive her bodily strength. Those remained obviously bright and vigorous, while that as evidently wasted and decayed. To facilitate filial duty and assistance, therefore, and to repose more immediately in the arms of filial affection, she consented to pass the remainder of her days in the family of her youngest daughter. It was time, indeed, to relinquish maternal and domestick cares. But idleness, or inactivity was irksome to her mind. Employment was her element to the very close of life; and her children's children, who were then the objects of her immediate and persevering attention, can never lose the impression of her forming hand. For, saith the book of inspiration—“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

In her last sickness, of about three weeks, she was patient. Hopes were at first entertained of her recovery: Dr. Lincoln, her attending physician, was constant and faithful in his exertions to protract her invaluable life; and Dr. Porter, by his *uncommon* solicitude on this occasion, as well as by his particular tenderness during her residence with him, evinced the powerful hold she had taken of the affections of a son in law. But her dissolution had become inevita-

ble. The event of death however, brought no alarm to her mind. In full possession of her understanding and recollection, she declared herself satisfied with life; resigned and willing to die; and witnessed to her friends a good hope of a happy

immortality through Christ, the Saviour, having "for her crown of rejoicing, the testimony of her conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God she had her conversation in the world."

MOTIVES FOR DISTRIBUTING THE SCRIPTURES.

*Extracted from a discourse delivered at the last annual meeting of
"The Bible Society of Massachusetts."*

I. A PRIMARY motive for distributing the Scriptures, is derived from their divine authority.

That they claim, on valid grounds, this authority, it will not now be attempted to prove.

Professing then to believe, that the sacred scriptures contain "the words of everlasting life," shall we not contribute our utmost efforts to disseminate them among our needy brethren? In the enjoyment of so great a blessing, shall we be unmindful of those, who have not the means of procuring it, or who, from unavoidable circumstances, are ignorant of its real value?

From the consideration, that our lot has been cast in a highly favoured portion of the community, where, from childhood, we have "known the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation," we are in danger of becoming insensible to our privileges, because they are

so common. Let us but impress on our minds the habitual conviction, that we possess, in this blessed volume, a treasure, which is of inestimable value, and we shall not rest satisfied with its solitary enjoyment. We shall feel solicitous, that others also should partake its divine benefits. We shall persevere in our exertions to distribute it, till every one in the vast family of man, shall hear, in his own language, the wonderful plan of redemption, which it unfolds. Suitably impressed with the divine authority of the gospel, we shall maintain and exhibit a very different spirit, from that which commonly actuates mere men of the world. With their whole hearts they seek the exclusive possession of its riches and honours. But in the kingdom of Christ, the case is widely different. Here, enjoyment is heightened by participation, and in

proportion, as we possess the gospel, we are anxious that others also should share it.

II. The great objects, which the sacred scriptures are designed and adapted to accomplish, suggest other reasons for distributing them.

They contribute to the highest temporal welfare of society; not, however, by prescribing any definite form of civil or ecclesiastical polity; but by the instructions and motives which they furnish, to discountenance vice, in all its forms, and to advance every thing virtuous and praise-worthy. By teaching and inducing men to govern themselves, they lighten the task of legislators and magistrates; they essentially aid the cause of morals; and they possess an influence over the conscience, beyond the reach of human authority.

On subjects most interesting to mortals, they also furnish the amplest instructions; on the creation of the world, on the moral character and destination of man, on the perfections and government of God, on the immortality of the soul, and on the method of salvation by Jesus Christ.—What a cheering light do they thus shed on doctrines, otherwise either wholly unknown, or but partially revealed, imperfectly believed, and not sufficiently established, greatly to influence the practice!

But the most important view which we can take of the scriptures, is to consider them as instrumental in preparing men for endless and increasing felicity, beyond the grave. To this end

they are adapted; and this object they profess, by the agency of the Most High, to accomplish.—Our belief of this truth must be faint and cold, if it do not stimulate us to diligent and persevering efforts, to send the means of salvation to every part of the habitable world.

III. The sufficiency of the scriptures for all the essential purposes of religion, is a third argument for exerting ourselves to distribute them.

Were it necessary, in order that men may become Christians, to train them to the peculiarities of a sect, we might be permitted to hesitate as to the expediency of intrusting to their care the sacred scriptures alone. There would be just grounds for apprehension, that, without the influence of human authority, they would be more likely to fall into dangerous and fatal errors, than to become established in the truth. In this case it would be the height of presumption to send forth the Bible, without note or comment; unaccompanied by those formularies, which are essential to its right interpretation. Hence some professed Protestants both in our own and in other countries, have strenuously maintained the inexpediency and the danger of distributing the scriptures without these necessary appendages.

But did not Christ declare, that he came to "preach the gospel to the poor?" Is it not a necessary consequence, that its essential truths are level to their capacities? To what uninspired man, or body of men, has the

great Head of the church imparted the power, of dictating to their fellow mortals an interpretation of the sacred oracles?—Was not the apostle Paul careful to inform the Corinthians, that he claimed no such dominion over their faith? Was not the reformation from Popery principally effected by forcible resistance of this proud infringement of the rights of conscience? It cannot, for a moment, be questioned, that the most distinguishing doctrines of Protestantism are the sufficiency of the scriptures, and the right of private judgment. To be consistent, we must not deny, that **THE BIBLE IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS**; that it contains, within itself, all the necessary rules for interpreting its essential doctrines, which no human being has a right to increase or diminish, or impair, or authoritatively explain for others; and that every honest inquirer is capable of understanding them.

Without these principles, our ancestors cannot be vindicated in their separation from the church of Rome. On no other grounds, can we be justified in resisting the "yoke, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear."

Maintaining, then, as we profess, the sufficiency of the scriptures, and not only the right, but the competency of private judgment to understand their essential truths, what irresistible arguments impel us to contribute, to the utmost of our power, to their diffusion? In what other way can we evince the reality of

our belief? In what other way can we manifest the sincerity of our profession? How else shall we preserve consistency of conduct? In this view of the subject, what a powerful motive have we to send the scriptures to the destitute, with the prayer uttered by our blessed Lord to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth!"

IV. Another motive to this end, is the evident design of Providence, that the scriptures shall be dispersed among the nations of the earth, by human instrumentality.

Had it been agreeable to the plan of God's Providence, he might have so ordered it, that all should be made acquainted with the great truths of revealed religion, without the agency of fellow mortals. At the introduction of Christianity, he indeed employed miraculous means to propagate its truths. He has since been carrying on his purposes of mercy, by the instrumentality of uninspired men.—We have reason to believe, that he will continue to employ the same means, till "all flesh shall see the salvation of God;" till there shall be no occasion to "teach every man his neighbour, saying, know the Lord; for all shall know him from the least unto the greatest."

In how interesting a light does this view of the subject present the necessity and the value of our individual and united exertions, to disseminate the truths of our holy religion! It represents us, as included in the grand

commission, "to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." All cannot, indeed, be literally those messengers of divine truth, which this injunction contemplates. But we may, and we must, bear each one his part in this great transaction. The gospel cannot be preached, unless it be sent; and it cannot be sent to all the destitute, without much expense.— Few among us are so poor, but we may do something towards defraying it. The more we consider the necessities of our fellow-men, the pre-eminent blessings, which the scriptures are instrumental, under God, of producing, and our ability to contribute to their dispersion, the more shall we be stimulated to "abound in this work of the Lord."

How urgent is the call on us, to be thus "fellow Helpers to the truth!" How glorious the privilege, to be "workers together with God," in his designs of love and mercy, "to give light to them, that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide their feet into the way of peace!" Compared with these efforts, the greatest and most successful exertions for temporal good are of little significance, the brightest laurels of the conqueror must tarnish in our view!

V. The destitute state of many in our own, as well as heathen lands, is another argument for activity and perseverance in distributing the scriptures.

At the formation of "THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF MASSACHU-

SETTS," it was a question with some of our intelligent fellow citizens, living in the midst of plenty, and conversant with those only, to whom the scriptures were an easy acquisition, whether any were to be found, in our land of gospel light, who had not the means of procuring the Bible. Subsequent investigation must satisfy the most incredulous, that, even in our *immediate* vicinity, there were some, who pined in secret for "the waters of life;" and that great numbers, who could scarcely procure for themselves the necessaries for subsistence, received with tears of gratitude the present of a Bible.

We generally feel it incumbent to contribute, of our substance, to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked. Who would not, with equal readiness, exert himself to satisfy those, "who hunger and thirst after righteousness?" Who is not willing to send "the true bread from heaven" to the destitute, who are even insensible to its worth, in the hope that it may nourish and satisfy some longing souls?

Our annual reports make it evident, that we have wants to be yet supplied; and that, notwithstanding many distinguished acts of private and publick munificence, there are still calls on our charity among ourselves, which it will require all our present exertions to answer. With what emphasis may the language of our Saviour to his primitive disciples be addressed to us,— "Freely ye have received, freely give!"

[To be continued.]

BOSSUET'S VIEWS OF MELANCTHON.

THE biographer of Bossuet remarks, that among the first Reformers, there was one, of whom Bossuet ever spoke with the most lively interest, and as I may say, with an affection, truly parental. This was Melancthon; and we must hear Bossuet himself speak of Melancthon.

"Luther, contending for the reform of abuses, and proclaiming in a manner, so novel, the grace of Jesus Christ, appeared the only genuine preacher of the Gospel, to the youthful Melancthon, who was then more versed in polite literature, than in subjects of theology. The novelty of the doctrine and of the sentiments of Luther, constituted in itself a charm to lively spirits. Melancthon was at the head of these in Germany. He joined to learning, to politeness, to elegance of style, a singular moderation. He alone was thought capable to take the place of Erasmus in literature; and Erasmus himself would have raised him by his influence to the first honours among the literary, if he had not taken side against the church.

"We find Melancthon transported with a sermon, which Luther had preached on a certain Sabbath, on the rest, which God enjoyed, after the work of creation. The novelty of the thoughts, the vehemence and liveliness of his eloquence, recommended by all the ornaments of his native topick, and received with unequalled applause,

were sufficient to captivate the young Professor. Luther seemed, in the view of Melancthon, the greatest of men, a prophet, sent of God. The unexpected success of the recent reformation confirmed these impressions.— Melancthon was artless and credulous; as pure minds are apt to be. Behold him then a convert. All the other professors of belles-lettres followed his example; and Luther became their idol. They were opposed perhaps with too much acrimony. The zeal of Melancthon was inflamed. His confidence in Luther carried him farther and farther; and he yielded at last to the flattering hope of sharing with his master the glory of reforming bishops and popes, princes and kings, and emperours.

"It is true, that the excesses of Luther were always the subject of regret to his moderate disciple. Luther carried every thing to extremes; and what he said was more suited to irritate than to quiet opposition; and Melancthon could neither excuse nor defend his extravagances.— What he had hoped in the reformation, which Luther commenced, was Christian liberty, and freedom from every human yoke. But he found himself deceived. For nearly fifty years he had seen the Lutheran church suffering either from oppression or from anarchy. There never was a severer master than Luther; nor a tyranny more intelle-

rable than that which he assumed in matters of doctrine. His arrogance was so well known, that they used to say, "there were two Popes, one was at Rome, the other was Luther: and that the latter was the worst of the two."

Melancthon, says the biographer of Bossuet, was the most unhappy victim of the tyranny of Luther, because he was the most amiable of men. And he tells us, that Luther treated him with such severity, that he had resolved to withdraw himself for ever from his presence; and had even thought of seeking an asylum among the Turks.

The hope of a real reformation of abuses, was undoubtedly the motive of Melancthon, whose pure and simple manners attested the candour and sincerity of his heart. But notwithstanding the superiority of his mind, Melancthon paid his tribute to the prejudices of his age. He shared with the most enlightened of his contemporaries in their blind and superstitious confidence in the science of astrology. But even amidst this delusion, he showed the intelligence and the purity of his spirit. Indeed it was always seen, that Melancthon combined with the most brilliant imagination, the most amiable and engaging affections of nature.

No one was more worthy than Melancthon to *adorn the Catholick church* by his talents and

character. He loved religion and virtue. He was sincerely attached to truth. But, though he sought it all his life, he was ever fluctuating between opposing opinions, and *never could enjoy that mental repose, which is to be found only in submission to an authority, capable of restraining the wandering fancy, and establishing a wavering faith.* The man, who most deserved affection and happiness, lived and died the most unhappy of men. It was among the very party, of which he was himself the glory and ornament, that he found his most implacable enemies. He asked for death; and he received it as the gift of heaven. But he had not even the consolation of pouring his last thoughts and sighs into the bosom of friendship. The most faithful and illustrious of his friends, the learned Camerarius, who at the report of his danger was hastening to embrace him, was stopt on his way by the news of his death. A few hours only before his death, he wrote on a paper, upon his bedstead, the reasons which led him to welcome death as his solace. The principal were that he should no longer be exposed to the ill-will of the theologians of his party; that he was going to see God, and should behold in an unclouded light those mysteries, which he had seen on earth only through a veil. Melancthon died in 1560.

ON INTEMPERANCE.

No. 7.

NEXT to our exertions to *prevent* intemperance should be our efforts to *remedy* the evil, where it exists.

This, it must be acknowledged, is a difficult, but, blessed be God, it is not an impracticable task. A few precious instances of reformation from this vice must be within the recollection of every observing person.

The language often employed upon this subject is either too presumptuous, or too despondent. It is too presumptuous, when recovery from intemperance is represented to be so easy, as to relax the efforts, which are indispensable to the accomplishment of the object. It is too despondent, when amendment is considered as entirely hopeless, and no encouragement is therefore given to the attempt.

Against each of these extremes, it becomes us with equal caution to guard.

A severity of remark and reproof in relation to this vice, is in like manner, often used, which is equally unfavourable to the hope of its cure.

A confirmed sot is indeed one of the most nauseous and repulsive objects, which can be presented to the imagination. It is impossible to contemplate such a character without mingled emotions of disgust and irritation.—But if these feelings be not asso-

ciated with pity, there is great danger, that we shall be driven to language, which, instead of being adapted to the reformation of the offender, will provoke his resentment, discourage his efforts, or harden his heart. Such a mode of treatment cannot be judicious.

Let us rather convince such a one, that we feel tenderly alive to his reputation, that we take a deep interest in his welfare, and that the methods we employ for his recovery are dictated not so much by anger or contempt, as by a real regard to his best good. Let some prudent friend, who shares his full confidence, and has access to his heart, be chosen to remonstrate with him, in a spirit of love, on the part which he is acting, on the grief, which his conduct is occasioning his dearest friends, on the injury which he is bringing on his reputation, on the inevitable ruin, which threatens his worldly affairs, and on the awful retributions of eternity, which await the incorrigibly impenitent.—Let him endeavour to impress his mind with the conviction, that reformation, to be effectual, must be speedy; and that, if it be not immediately undertaken, it is hopeless. Let him not leave the unhappy person, till he has obtained from him a most solemn promise, in writing, that by the grace of God, he will, from

this moment, take no liquor capable of producing inebriation.

This is one method of reformation, which has, in some instances, been blessed. It is not pretended, that this precise mode would be judicious in all cases. Let the nature of the remedy be wisely adapted to the circumstances of the person to be reformed.

One reflection must for ever be borne in mind, that there is no such thing, for any length of time, as a partial reformation from this vice. It must be immediate and total, or it will be futile.

In proof of this, the appeal might be safely made to every one's observation. In confirmation of this remark, the celebrated Dr. Trotter of Great Britain, who has published perhaps the best treatise, which has ever appeared on the subject of intemperance, has made the declaration, which cannot be too often repeated, nor too deeply impressed, "With drunkards, my opinion is, and confirmed by much experience, that spirits IN EVERY FORM ought *at once to be taken from them*. WHEREVER I have known the drunkard *effectually* reformed, he has AT ONCE abandoned his potion."

Let not the opinion then be for a moment indulged, that reformation from the inordinate love of strong drink can be partial. Such a delusive expectation has occasioned more abortive projects of amendment, than all other arguments united.

Great numbers have failed to effect an entire reformation by binding themselves to abstain from intoxicating liquors only for a limited time. A striking fact to represent the inexpediency of such a resolution, occurs in an address* before the Massachusetts Society for suppressing intemperance. "A miller, in a paroxism of intemperance, fell into the stream, and with difficulty was recovered. The first moment of sanity he improved in pertinent reflection upon his danger and deliverance, and in a solemn oath not to taste of spirit for *forty years*. The oath was sacredly kept. It is painful to add, that he relapsed, on the day of his jubilee, and died a sot between eighty and ninety years of age. Had the resolution been for life, he might have been saved."

It is equally absurd to fix upon some future period, as, for example, the beginning of another year, to commence reformation. This is a mere temporary delusion, which the mind practises upon itself, and which fails not to be made manifest, when the time of trial arrives.

There can further be no hope of a remedy, while those, who are addicted to a free use of spirituous liquors, continue to visit places, where their habit was formed, or has been indulged; and, especially, while they associate with those, who have been their partners in indulgence, who will not fail to ridicule their purposes of amendment, and who

* By the Rev. Abiel Abbot of Beverly, June 2, 1815.

will try every possible method to overcome their scrupulous resolutions. How important then is the caution of the wise man. "Enter not into the path of the

wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it; and pass away."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

THE people of Lancaster, in the county of Worcester, have begun the erection of a large and elegant brick Meeting-House.—believing that the religious publick will find satisfaction and entertainment in the perusal of the address, made to a numerous collection of citizens, on laying the corner stone. I have received from the Reverend gentleman, who delivered it, a copy, which I transmit for publication in your valuable work.

A CONSTANT READER.

July, 1816.

Address of the Rev. Mr. Thayer, to an assembly, convened to witness the laying of the corner stone of a house for worship, now building in Lancaster.

My Christian brethren and friends,

A variety of interesting thoughts, crowds upon the mind of a christian community when entering on the work of building a temple for religious worship. The individuals are in danger of being oppressed and borne down by a consideration of its magnitude. They read, "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." What disgrace, em-

barrassment, and ruin threaten us, if his presence and blessing, go not with us, to the work! "Why are ye cast down, O ye desponding christians, and why is your soul disquieted within you!"

Review the Jewish history.—Of one temple only is the record transmitted to us, that it failed in the execution. The erection of this was permitted by the apostate Julian, under the mask of moderation, and in the exercise of a spirit, hostile to the christian interest. The undertakers were an unbelieving race, who approved the madness of their progenitors, in crucifying the Lord of glory. As a just frown of divine providence upon the motives which projected this enterprise, and upon the unbelief of those who were employed in the execution of it, "while they were removing the rubbish, formidable balls of fire, issuing out of the ground with a dreadful noise, dispersed both the works and the workmen, and repeated earthquakes, filled the spectators of this astonishing phenomenon, with terror and dismay."

Cast your eye over Christendom. Where will you find the

people, who in the spirit of love and from respect to the Redeemer "began to build, and were not able to finish?" The truth is, it is an ordinance of heaven, that every thing connected with religion gathers strength and insures prosperity by prosecution. See it in whatever relates to the christian spirit and character. Where is the individual disciple, who began a spiritual edifice on the foundation, besides which no man can lay, even Jesus Christ, and was not prospered in rearing it in all its comely proportions, elegance and beauty! See it in the erection of houses for divine worship. Where is the people however poor, or small in number, who engaged in earnest in this business, and did not find their courage and ability make equal progress with their work? I say not these things, because extraordinary symptoms of depression are manifested by you. I say them to invite your continued trust in the protection and blessing of heaven; to establish you in the belief that the work is the work of God, and that if you are faithful, he will make it to prosper.

Limited knowledge may put some on the inquiries: what injury will accrue to a town, from indifference to its house of worship? What advantage may be expected from building a sanctuary, which shall unite elegance with simplicity? I am prepared to meet and to answer these questions.

The reputation of the town is deeply interested. While the inhabitants "live in their cieled

houses, if the house of the Lord lie waste," and in ruins, it is proof of the universal correctness of moral sentiment, that there will be but one report respecting them. It will be a common observation, and it is as just as it is common, that their moral taste is debased, and that they have a lukewarmness and supineness in religion, which forebode a general spiritual decay. On the other hand, by due solicitude for the temple of God, so far as the favourable opinion of the world is to be prized, the worshippers will have a ground of confidence, that their publick spirit, their moral and christian character, will be in high estimation.

It may also be noticed as one argument, that the building of such a temple, as the inquirer contemplates, will have a favourable operation on the secular interest of a people. The towns in this immediate vicinity, in which union prevailed in their previous measures, are interesting examples of the success of the experiment. Their neighbours perceive and do them the justice and honour, to proclaim; the candid and judicious amongst themselves are forward to acknowledge, that the projection of, and entrance upon this work, gave animation and vigour to a spirit of diligence and enterprise. It is equally apparent, that there has been a gradual and continual growth of their reputation and wealth.

There is a still more solid argument. The dependence of reasonable beings, on sensible

objects for intellectual and moral progress, is matter of general belief. We may then infer the incalculable benefit, in a religious view to all classes, particularly to the rising generation, which may be expected to result from a decent attention to houses of worship.

These are motives which are worthy of being called to your remembrance. Set a christian value on the recompense of reward which is held out to encourage you. No labour will be too assiduous, no expense too

extravagant, no sacrifice unreasonable, by which these great objects may be secured. You may with safety be told, that while with proper motives you are employed in erecting "a habitation for the Most High," you are building up a character; you are advancing your temporal interest; you are preparing yourselves, and you are assisting your children in their preparation for "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR, WITH EXTRACTS, FROM THE CHRISTIAN
OBSERVER.

Sir,

BEING a regular reader of your useful magazine, and fully approving its laudable design, in promoting a spirit of brotherly love among christians, I feel a gratification in presenting to you some extracts from a recent number of the *Christian Observer*, which, as most of your readers know, is a valuable English publication of what are usually denominated *orthodox* sentiments. These are liberal and enlightened remarks, and in perfect union, I believe, with the principles of the *Christian Disciple*.—The extracts are from an essay "on certain practical errors among professing christians."

Yours &c. S. A.

"Let me be allowed, then, to point out what appears to me to be the prevailing errors of a cer-

tain class of christians. These are, an excessive fondness for high and mysterious doctrines; an almost exclusive regard to the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ; an intemperate eagerness after *comfort* in religious ordinances; an aversion to distinct statements of Christian duties; a great desire to be told of perseverance; a love of fanciful and ingenious interpretations of scripture; an estimate of the piety of others by a comparison of it with their own as a standard; and a desire to infuse their own sentiments into the minds of others, instead of referring them to the word of God.

"Are the 'deep things of God' to be discussed in every sermon? Is one office of Christ to be regarded, to the exclusion of other offices? Are happy feelings the

great object of worship? Is the piety of one individual to be judged of by the piety of another? Are we to hear with indifference, and even with dislike, the holy tempers and the strict morals of the Gospel inculcated on Christians?"

"A false taste in theology is formed and cherished: a false standard of truth and piety is established. The unfortunate individual goes to church: if some of his favourite points are handled, he is almost lost in admiration. Why? Because such or such a doctrine was discussed. But if it happens that some topick of Christian temper, or Christian morality, has been expanded and pressed on the conscience, he returns home peevish, discontented, and *censorious*. Why? Because the preacher has been only telling him what to *do*."

"But true religion is generally of slow growth. It is not a plant that shoots up rapidly by means of artificial heat, appearing before us presently in its full dimensions, and in all its charms. It is the tree that grows imperceptibly in the field, beneath the sun, and amidst the showers of heaven; which smiles in the

roughest storm, and sustains un-hurt the rudest winter, and continues long to cheer the eye of man. Christianity does not allow of precipitancy in its disciples."

"To the love of the marvellous, as one cause, I ascribe much of the love that some Christians have for the mysterious in doctrinal religion, for the inexplicable in what is called experimental religion, and for the curious and allegorical in the interpretation of scripture. He who would make real attainments in religion, must restrain his imagination. We are prone to admire the mystical and the fanciful, instead of attending to plain and sober reality. This is sickly and pernicious."

"Is there not naturally in man a principle of *pride*, which makes him obstinate in his attachment to the views which he has once embraced? He is therefore, reluctant to question the truth of his opinions, and to hear the remarks of others upon them. He will not harbour the suspicion that *he* may possibly be wrong. Others may be wrong, but he cannot. But this is neither Christianity, Reason, nor Protestantism."

THOUGHTS ON THE DANGER OF INNOVATIONS.

"Be it remembered, whatever now is establishment was ONCE innovation."

Philanthropist, No. XL. p. 289.

THE motto before us was taken from a speech delivered in the British House of Commons, by Sir Samuel Romilly, in support of a bill, which he had in-

troduced "to alter the sentence for high treason."

The law which this philanthropist wished to have amended, subjected the criminal to this

savage doom ;—“ 1. That the offender be drawn to the gallows, and not be carried or walk ;— 2. That he be hanged by the neck and then cut down alive ;— 3. That his entrails be taken out and burned, while he is yet alive ;— 4. That his head be cut off ;— 5. That his body be divided into four parts ;— 6. That his head and quarters be at the king’s disposal.”

To many it will probably appear astonishing, that such an inhuman law was ever enacted by a British Parliament; and still more surprising that so recently as 1813 a humane attempt to amend the law should have met with opposition. But such is the fact, and the Bill was rejected in the House of Commons by a majority of *twelve*.

No greater obstacles to human improvement can be named, than an undue veneration for the opinions and customs of ancestors, and the propensity which exists to raise the cry of danger against every attempt for innovation. One of the principal reasons for rejecting the humane Bill of Sir S. Romilly was this, that the sentence for high treason “ had been established for centuries”—“ had existed from time immemorial.” It was in reply to this popular argument, that the mover of the bill said, “ Be it remembered,—whatever *now* is establishment, was *once* innovation.”

What can be more obviously true than this remark? But what has been less considered by people in general? How great is the number of mankind to whom

the thought never occurred, that all human laws, opinions and customs, were once as *new* as those of yesterday, and as liable to be reproached as *innovations*. This however, is true of every human law that now exists, whether civil, martial, or ecclesiastical. It is true of every human creed, of every article of faith, which has divided the Christian world into sects, and of every established custom, whether Christian, Mahometan, or Pagan, merciful or unmerciful, wise or unwise, disputed or undisputed.

All those opinions which have been either honoured or reproached by the name of *orthodoxy*, whether among Papists or Protestants, and whether true or false, were once innovations. These innovations were made by *substituting* some other words as preferable to those used in the scriptures; or by *adding* some human invention to the word of God. Christians have not been in the habit of disputing this question—“ are the doctrines true which were taught by Christ and his Apostles ?” But this has been the ground of dispute.—“ Did Christ and his Apostles teach the doctrines which this or that Doctor, Rabbi, Pope or Council has affirmed to be the doctrines of the gospel ? The changes which have been made in stating the doctrines of the gospel have all been innovations; and the custom of forming human creeds was itself an innovation of a dangerous character. Had it not been for this innovation, Christians would

never have embrued their hands in each others blood, nor kindled the flames of martyrdom on account of differences in opinion.

All the oppressive and sanguinary customs which exist among Pagans, or Mahometans, or Christians, were once perfectly novel, however much they may now be revered for their antiquity.

The African slave trade was once an innovation: but it continued so long, that it required another innovation to abolish the custom. The agents in the attempts for abolition were reproached as innovators.

The barbarous custom of duelling was once as novel among *men*, as a similar custom would be if adopted to day by *women*.

The same may be said of publick war for the settlement of national disputes. This custom originated in a rude and savage state of society, and it has always been supported by savage passions. But such is the power of popular custom, that even among men who call themselves civilized Christians, the most wanton butcheries of the human family are regarded as honourable and heroick exploits; and he that does the most mischief, receives the greatest share of applause. From a great portion of the people in Christendom the greatest *destroyers* of mankind receive a far greater share of renown, than the greatest *benefactors*—GOD HIMSELF not excepted! And such is the delusion which still prevails in favour of war, that the greatest *curse* is regarded by many as a *blessing*;

and a humane attempt to preserve peace and to save the lives of men, is regarded as a *dangerous innovation*.

As the pagans and savages support their barbarous customs by the arguments from antiquity, and the wisdom and piety of their ancestors; so do Christians, and with equal propriety.

As it is certain that all human opinions, laws and customs, which are “*now establishment*” were “*once innovations*,” two conclusions follow of course:—

First. All those opinions, laws and customs, which have come down to us from our ancestors, should be examined with as great care as those of modern origin. No article of belief has acquired a particle of truth by age. Nor has any law or custom which originated in “*malevolent passions*” acquired a particle of propriety by obtaining popularity. If we may sit down contented, and admit a doctrine to be correct, a law to be equitable, or a custom to be proper and necessary, because it was so regarded by our ancestors, why may not the pagans with equal propriety adopt the same principle, and for ever reject the gospel?

Second. As we should reject the antiquity of an opinion or custom, as not being any proof of its propriety, so also should we reject its novelty. If an opinion is to be admitted as correct, because it is *new*, for this very reason we should admit the correctness of ancient opinions; for they also were once *new*, and they have not grown false by age. Therefore, whether an

opinion or custom be ancient or modern, it should ever lie open to the most impartial and strict examination.

As the most opposite opinions may have been of equal antiquity, and equally popular in different countries, it must be evident to every judicious and candid person, that we never can safely infer the correctness of an opinion, or the propriety of a custom, either from its antiquity or its popularity. If either antiquity or popularity is to be the criterion of truth and propriety, Protestants must yield to Papists, and Christians to Pagans.

Christ and his apostles were regarded as innovators by unbelievers both among the Jews and the Gentiles. Luther and Calvin, were regarded in the same light by Roman Catholicks; and such has been the fate of reformers in every age.

From these facts it is clear, that people ought to be careful in respect to raising the cry of danger, when the propriety of an ancient opinion or custom is called in question, or a novel opinion is advanced. For by this cry, this imprudent conduct, the truth has often been rejected, and the best of men have been treated as the worst. People of the present age should be ready to admit the possibility that some opinions and customs are still popular, which are as injurious as those which have already been exploded by the progress of light; and every man should view himself as liable to err, and to be unduly influenced by education and custom.

In examining ancient opinions and customs, we should take into view the age in which they probably originated, and the means by which they have been supported. For some opinions which are now popular, originated in ages of barbarity, compared with the present; and some have been supported by means which give just reason to suspect, that they will not "bear the shock of rational discussion," and that they would long ago have been discarded, had they not been protected by terror.—Truth and propriety stand in no need of the Inquisition, nor the tongue or pen of the reviler for their support.

General Associations are among the innovations of the present age in New-England.—But they are not to be censured on that ground; for some innovations are very useful, while others are very pernicious.

Consoiations are "establishment" in Connecticut—the attempt to establish them in Massachusetts is an innovation. But if no other objection can be urged against them, we ought to be silent. This innovation, however, appears to have been proposed to suppress or prevent other innovations. It then becomes a question, whether it be not of a *hostile* character, and more dangerous to Christian liberty, peace and unity, than every other innovation against which it is to be armed. But at first view it seems not a little remarkable, that men who are so forward to raise the cry of danger on account of innovations, should

themselves adopt an innovation in principle, in discipline, and practice, as an antidote for innovations in opinion.*

As all established opinions and customs were once innovations, so all *improvements* in the arts and sciences, in the modes of education, and in the means of meliorating the condition of mankind, have resulted from innovations. Had there been no innovations within four centuries, we should all have been Papists; and had there been none since the days of the Messiah, we should all have been Pagans and Savages.

The innumerable institutions of the present age, religious, charitable, humane, moral and pacifick, are but so many important *innovations*; and on that ground they have generally met with more or less opposition.—Even Bible Societies have been opposed, censured and reproached; but much less in this country than in Great Britain.

Such is the veneration which many people have for whatever was esteemed by their ancestors, and such their alarm at almost every remarkable innovation,

which is not of their own making, that they are generally prepared to apply the observation introduced by our Saviour respecting wine, and to say, “*the old is better.*” With some, “an old error is better than a new truth;” an old law, however savage and cruel, is better than a new one, which is more humane; an old custom, which has murdered its hundreds of millions, is better than a new institution which is designed to preserve peace, and to save the lives of men.

It is not perhaps half a century since there was not in this country *one* American Dictionary, Geography, Gazetteer, Arithmetick, Grammar, or even Spelling book; nor any periodical work, except Newspapers and Almanacks. But one innovator after another has been rising up, and now the land is filled with *American innovations*. Each innovator in his turn has had to encounter some share of reproach and censure, from those who were disposed to say “The old is better.” In some instances perhaps the censures have been just, in others, unfounded or extravagant.

* Since the above was prepared for the press, we have seen and read with delight, an extract from the last Pastoral Address of the General Association of Massachusetts Proper. It is an excellent document. We shall with pleasure give it a place in the Christian Disciple, as an important article of intelligence. The pacifick and benevolent spirit of this Address, may be regarded as evidence that, in permitting the General Association to be formed, “**GOD MEANT IT UNTO GOOD.**” Should the future proceedings of that body be in harmony with the spirit of this part of their Pastoral Address, the project for Con-sociations will of course be consigned to oblivion; and the great object of the General Association will be, not to divide the churches of Christ and to exhibit them as churches, *militant*, and as enemies one to another, but to unite them in the exercise of mutual love, which is the bond of peace and christian perfection.

All who are acquainted with history very well know, that such clerical combinations have generally been destructive to christian liberty: But as they are capable of doing much evil, while governed by the spirit of intolerance and usurpation; so they are capable of doing much good, while under the influence of the spirit of “*Peace on earth and good will to men.*”

These desultory remarks will now be closed with a “celebrated aphorism” which was quoted in the speech from which the motto was taken: “A for-

ward retention of custom is more baneful than innovation; and they who reverence too much old times, are not of the most service to the new.”

OUR SAVIOUR'S PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

[Concluded from p. 232.]

HAVING given a detail of the *fulfilment* of the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, some reflections may be proper on the prophecy itself, and on the principal event.

1. This prophecy was not a loose and general prediction, such as a man of extraordinary foresight might have made upon observing the character of the Jews, and the situation of Judea. It is too explicit and circumstantial to allow us to suppose that it was no more than a fortunate conjecture. Who but God himself, or one endowed by him, would dare to pronounce upon the fate of a nation in such unqualified and irrevocable terms? And not only so, but to declare that the generation then living should not have passed away till all these things should be accomplished! Even if no circumstances of the calamity had been pointed out, the mere intimation of the total overthrow of the Mosaick economy, with all its splendour, antiquity and veneration, could not have been imagined by an ordinary Jew; much

less that their temple, towards which they worshipped from all quarters of the globe—that temple where God himself was supposed to reside, should be laid level with the ground. This was a conception which a Jew dared not entertain, an event which he would not have dared to predict.

But our Saviour predicted events of this improbable character; and he impressed the expectation of them so forcibly on the minds of his disciples, that they were prepared to expect the catastrophe. Hence we find, in the epistles of the New-Testament, expressions unquestionably referring to this extraordinary expectation.

Second. If we consider the importance of this event to the cause of Christianity, we shall cease to wonder that it was made the subject of so solemn a prediction. The first Christians were Jews; and in every place where converts were made, some of them were of Jewish origin. Notwithstanding their reception of Jesus as the Messiah, they

retained a strong attachment to the Mosaick rituals, and to the seat of their forefathers' worship. Hence it is natural to suppose our Saviour's prediction and its accomplishment must have deeply interested the feelings of the Christian Jews at an early period. But the event was of great importance to the establishment of Christianity. It was the Jewish power that persecuted Christianity from its cradle, and nothing but the supernatural guardianship of Heaven prevented its being strangled at its birth. During the existence of the Jews as a nation, or while their ecclesiastical power was in exercise, they were in every place the inveterate enemies of the gospel. But when Jerusalem was overthrown, Christianity may be said to have erected its head in the world.

Third. The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem was of great importance in establishing our Saviour's claims as the Messiah. The event was often mentioned by him as the *coming or appearance of the Son of man*, and the fulfilment was an event by which it was to be known that he was indeed the Christ of God. The great cause why the Jews rejected him was, that he did not appear in pomp as a temporal prince, according to the expectations they had formed of the Messiah that God had promised. Instead of appearing as a mighty warriour, he was meek and lowly. All his encomiums were bestowed on qualities of mind the reverse of those which the Jews expected to see

exemplified in their Deliverer. They could not understand him when he intimated the sufferings which awaited himself, or them. When he went so far as to predict the utter demolition of their ecclesiastical polity and the ruin of their temple, nothing more was wanting to satisfy them, that he was either a madman or a blasphemer. On the truth of his predictions, therefore, the justice of his claims seem, in a great measure, to have rested. If the events took place according to his word, his claims as the Messiah were established. This then was the triumph of Christianity. It was an appeal to fact which was not to be resisted. The prediction *has* been fulfilled; God *has* vindicated the cause and the claims of his Son.

Fourth. The destruction of Jerusalem, and the present situation of the Jews, are circumstances of unspeakable importance in establishing the general truth of the Christian religion. If the Messiah, who was predicted in the Old Testament, has not appeared, how is it possible that one should ever arise to answer the description of the prophets? From the time of their dispersion, their scattered families were mingled, and their genealogies lost. The race of David, from which the Messiah was to spring, is as undistinguishable as any other race. Even their tribes are confounded, and the glory of Judah has perished with the rest. The expected Prince was suddenly to appear in his temple; but the temple is now

no more." If then the Messiah is yet to come, how is he to be known?

The present circumstances of the Jews all over the world, which have continued 1800 years—circumstances so peculiar and unparalleled, seem to indicate some great transgression, the effects if not the guilt of which are not wiped away. Compare their situation with that of any other people, and you find no parallel. They seem to be reserved to confirm the very gospel which they rejected, to testify to facts to which they would not listen, to keep uncorrupted those very prophecies which foretold their present fate, and to bear eternal witness to their authenticity.

What then was the great crime of this unhappy people? The sufferings of that generation among whom our Saviour appeared, would seem a fable in history, were they not so circumstantially related. Every thing in the history of the Jews points to a singular providence; a desolation has come upon them

which has no example, and which yet has no limits. Wretched people! What has been your crime? The traveller as he wanders over Palestine, and calls your history to remembrance, is lost in wonder till he ascends the hill where the Lord of glory was crucified by your fathers, the image of the cross bursts upon his fancy, and that fearful exclamation occurs to his mind, "HIS BLOOD BE ON US AND ON OUR CHILDREN!" and thus the mystery is resolved, the judgments of Jehovah are vindicated.

From the fearful fate of a nation once so mighty, let us learn to bow down before that Providence which directs the destiny of empires. What has often been, may again be, and there is not a man on earth who is uninterested in the fate of the nation to which he belongs. If the Jews were punished for their treatment of a Saviour in whom they did *not* believe, what have those to expect who profess to believe in him, and still live in disobedience to his commands?

B.

FACTS INTERESTING TO HUMANITY.

GRAT exerts have been made in Great Britain to reform the penal code, or to abolish many of the sanguinary laws which have long existed in that country. For this humane purpose a variety of facts and arguments are exhibited in the Philanthropist, to shew the evil tendency

of the existing laws, and to prove that publick executions tend rather to multiply than to diminish capital offences.

By one writer it is stated, that the sanguinary laws of Great Britain "award death for no less than one hundred and sixty different offences." The same

writer states that five children were condemned to death at the Old Bailey, Feb. 16, 1814, for burglary and stealing; that the youngest was *eight* years old, and the oldest but *twelve*; that the next day five more were sentenced to transportation for stealing cheese from a shop, and the oldest of these was but fifteen. Upon these facts the writer reasons as follows:—

“ Facts like these are surely an indication that something is radically wrong. Notwithstanding the severity of our laws, the daily Newspapers are continually giving evidence of multiplied atrocities; and it is now high time to inquire, whether the system we have been pursuing, is the best that could be devised for the prevention of crime and the protection of society.”

“ Now if it can be proved, as it certainly may, that a vast proportion of the victims to our criminal laws, have, through the neglect of society, been suffered to be trained, from their very infancy, in crime, while by very simple and practicable arrangements they might have been initiated in virtue, it will be difficult to avoid the conclusion that they have been unjustly dealt with; and that a heavy responsibility rests upon those who, having the power to save, have neglected to exert it.”

Another writer, to show the inutility of publick executions, and their deleterious influence, states a case that had recently occurred, of five persons who were hanged at the same time, for burglary, two of whom were

“ lads of nineteen.” Having stated a number of facts relating to the case, he observes:—

“ The extraordinary circumstance of five men being executed at once, for one offence, attracted vast multitudes of people, of the lower order, from all parts of the country. To see *five* of their fellow creatures hanged was as good as a horse-race, a boxing-match, or a bull-baiting. If nothing was intended but to amuse the rabble, at a great loss of their time and a considerable expense, the design was undoubtedly effected. If a publick entertainment was *not* the object, it may be asked, what benefit has a single individual derived from beholding the destruction of these miserable victims?”

He adds, “ Perhaps that question may be answered by stating that many of the spectators, immediately afterwards got intoxicated; and some cried out to their companions, with a significant gesture in allusion to the mode of punishment, “ *It is but a ten minutes job!* ” If such be the sentiments excited on the very spot, it cannot be supposed to be more salutary at a distance; and notwithstanding the sacrifice of those five men, the people of Shropshire must still fasten their doors.”

“ If house-breakers should learn to think light of human life, and adopt the precaution of committing *murder* the next time they commit a *robbery*, since the danger of detection would be less and the punishment no greater, what will the inhabitants of the country have to thank for it, but

this very spectacle ! a spectacle which cannot soften one heart, but may harden many ; which confounds moral distinctions, and draws away publick indignation from the guilt of the offender, to turn it against the severity of the law."

It affords pleasure to reflect that in our country a far less number of sanguinary laws are in force than are complained of in Great Britain ; and that publick executions are far less frequent. But whether, even in the United States, there is not room for improvement, is a question which

demands the serious consideration of the Christian and the Philanthropist. For it is believed that those who have had opportunity to attend publick executions, and are disposed to reflect on what usually occurs on those occasions, will be sensible, that such scenes have little tendency to prevent crimes, or to improve the morals of society. The laws of a state may be regarded as a good thermometer for ascertaining the character of its citizens. The more humane the laws, the more humane the people.

POETRY.

ABSENT FRIENDS.

When pleasure lags at musick's strain,
And mirth assails the heart in vain ;
To pensive thoughts the bosom bends,
And finds a theme in *Absent Friends*.

Remembrance then unfolds its store ;
Affection's tales oft told before,
And Fancy magick visions lends,
To catch a view of *Absent Friends*.

Pale apprehension starts with fear,
Some sad vicissitude to hear ;
And hope with causeless terror blends,
For fate unknown of *Absent Friends*.

The parent fond, the dutious child,
The feeling heart by love beguil'd,
Each to kind heaven a hoon commends,
That heaven be kind to *Absent Friends*.
Constrain'd thro' distant climes to roam,
Far from the sympathies of home ;
My soul its fervent wishes sends,
And circles round its *Absent Friends*.

But joy shall spread a brighter train,
And mirth indulge its freest strain,
The happy day which absence ends,
And gives me back my *much-lov'd Friends.*

Cattskill Recorder.

TO THE MEMORY OF ANTHONY BENEZET.

Friend to distress and patron of the poor,
The injur'd shar'd his service and his store ;
His time, his talents, all alike design'd,
One universal good to human kind.
Fix'd in the principles which he profess'd,
But gen'rous and humane to all the rest ;
Diffusive thus his charity began
And flow'd in unexhausted love to man.
Hail favour'd spirit ! now immortal rise,
And join th' exalted worship of the skies ;
Where bliss perfected flows one boundless tide
And names no more your love and life divide ;
Dissolv'd the narrow tie, th' impure alloy,
And God reveal'd shines forth your endless joy.*

A LITERARY WORK PROPOSED.

Mr. Joseph E. Worcester, of Salem, has issued proposals for publishing a *Universal Gazetteer and Dictionary of Geography*, ancient and modern ; containing a more complete enumeration, than has hitherto been published, of the Kingdoms, Countries, Provinces, Cities, Towns, Forts, Islands, Mountains, Capes, Seas, Bays, Lakes, Rivers, Indian Tribes, &c. in the known world. With a copious account of all the important articles.

The Gazetteer now proposed will, so far as it respects the *modern* geography of the eastern continent, be founded upon the basis of that of Cruttwell, with additions and corrections. On the subject of *ancient* geography, the work of the celebrated D'Anville, will be made the principal basis. With respect to *America*, materials have been collected from a great variety of sources. And the work will be found far more complete, with regard to this continent, than any that has yet been published. It will comprise in two large volumes, and in one alphabetical series, *more than four times as many articles of Geography*, as are contained in the Gazetteers which have been published in *America*.

* These lines are but an extract ; whether they have been before published, we are not informed.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

Facts relating to the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews ; collected from the Seventh Report.

THE Patron of the London Society is the Duke of Kent. The society has fourteen Vice Patrons, viz. one Duke, five Earls, and eight Lords. The President is Sir Thomas Baring. The Vice Presidents are seventeen persons of high standing.

The life subscribers to the society are 235 ; the lowest of the life subscriptions is 10*l* sterling, and the highest 210*l*. The amount of an annual subscription is at least one guinea. The annual subscribers are more than one thousand. There are between fifty and sixty Auxiliary Societies. Many liberal donations have been made to the society. One of 900*l* one of 600*l* and one of 400*l*. These three are anonymous, and they are the largest which we have discovered in the report.

This society is composed of members of the established Church and of Dissenters ; and the concerns of the society were managed for several years, by a committee composed of both descriptions. At length the society became subject to pecuniary embarrassments of a threatening aspect ; and it was found that many members of the established Church had declined affording relief, from a conscientious scruple respecting the propriety of associating with Dissenters in matters of discipline. When this became known to the dissenting subscribers, they held a meeting on the subject and passed several votes, the most important of which was the following :

" That as it appears that many zealous members of the established

Church have expressed their conscientious objections to unite with the society, whilst its affairs are managed by a committee consisting of persons of different religious denominations, and have intimated their willingness to support it if carried on exclusively by Churchmen : this meeting embraces the opportunity of proving, that they never, as Dissenters, had any other design but the conversion of the Jews to Christianity : and as it is probable that the assets are nearly sufficient to cover the debts, they therefore cannot feel the smallest objection to withdraw in favour of such brethren of the established Church, who testify a lively zeal in the grand cause, possessing also the means for promoting it."

This meeting of the Dissenters was held Feb. 6, 1815. At a subsequent extraordinary General Meeting of the London Society, the offer of the Dissenting brethren was accepted, as manifesting "a spirit most truly conciliatory ;" and they were earnestly requested to favour the society still, both with pecuniary aid and their prayers. This conduct of the Dissenters must have made a favourable impression on their brethren of the establishment. In the annual Report of May, 1815, the committee say, " They believe that, with few exceptions, the Dissenters who were previously subscribers will continue their support to the society."

The London Society is now wholly under the control of the members of the Episcopal Church ; and the established forms of worship are

the only forms to be admitted in the houses of worship devoted to the converted Jews.

In the course of one year ending March 31, 1815, the London society received, from

Auxiliary Societies,	12162, 11, 10
Penny Societies,	1276, 9, 4
Collections,	2929, 2, 1
Donations,	528, 0, 6

All the above was *exclusive* of life and annual subscriptions.

Extract from a Speech of George Griffin, Esq. delivered before the American Bible Society, at their meeting in New-York, May 13, 1816.

EIGHTEEN centuries ago, the divine author of our religion, about to ascend to his native heavens, pronounced with his farewell voice, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." A little band of Christian heroes obeyed the heavenly mandate; and, clothed in their master's armour, encountered and overcame the united powers of earth and hell. But the apostolick age did not always last. Seventeen hundred years have since elapsed, and more than three fourths of the human family are still enveloped in Pagan or Mahometan darkness. A lethargy, like the sleep of the sepulchre, had long fastened itself on the Christian world. It was the tremendous earthquake of modern atheism, that roused them from this slumber: and while, during the last twenty years, the vials of God's wrath have been pouring upon the nations, convulsing to its centre this distracted globe, the Bible has re-commenced its triumphs. This tree of heaven's planting has stood and strengthened amidst the prostration of thrones, and the concussion of empires. The apostolick age is returning. The countries of Europe, which lately rung with the clangour of arms, are now filled with societies for the promulgation of the gospel of peace. Through those fields, but lately drenched in human blood, now flow the streams of salvation. Europe is bending

under the mighty effort of extending redemption to a world. Kings and emperors are vying with the humblest of their subjects in this stupendous work. The coffers of the rich are emptied into heaven's treasury, and there also is received the widow's mite. But there is one nation which has stood forth pre-eminent in this career of glory. With the profoundest veneration, I bow before the majesty of the British and Foreign Bible Society.—This illustrious association, (its history is recorded in heaven, and ought to be proclaimed on earth,) has been instrumental in distributing a million and a half of volumes of the word of life; and has magnanimously expended, in a single year, near four hundred thousand dollars for the salvation of man.—This transcendent institution is the brightest star in the constellation of modern improvements, and looks down from its celestial elevation on the diminished glories of the Greecian and Roman name.

The electrick shock has at length reached our shores. Local Bible Societies have been heretofore established in this country; but they wanted extent of means, comprehensiveness of design, and consolidation of action. It was to be expected, and the Christian world had a right to expect, that the American nation would arise in the majesty of its collected might, and unite itself with the other powers of Christen-

dom, in the holy confederacy for extending the empire of religion and civilization. This auspicious era has now arrived. The last week has witnessed an august assemblage of the fathers of the American Churches, of every denomination, convened in this metropolis from all parts of the country, not to brandish the sword of religious controversy, but to unite with one heart, in laying the foundation of the majestic superstructure of the American Bible Society. Athens boasted of her temple of Minerva; but our city is more truly consecrated, by being the seat of this hallowed edifice. It is not a mosque, containing, or reputed to contain, the remains of the Arabian prophet, but a fabric reared and devoted to the living God by the united efforts of the American Churches. Fellow-citizens! will you coldly receive this honour, or will you not rather show yourselves worthy of this sacred distinction? I am persuaded, that your munificence and zeal in this holy cause will be recorded as an animating example to the nation. For to whom should it be reserved to electrify this western continent, but to the London of America?—Our country has long stood forth the rival of England in commerce and in arms; let her not be left behind in the glorious career of evangelizing the world.

Extract from the Speech of Peter A. Jay, Esq. before the American Bible Society.

The nations of Europe are now awake and active; they have sent forth the gospel into all lands, and its sound unto the ends of the earth. Their exertions are strenuous and unremitting. They eagerly emulate each other in the glorious strife. And shall we alone be idle? Blest as we are with opulence and ease, shall we be less grateful to

Him who gives them, than nations wasted with war?

Surely, Sir, we shall not refuse to run the race which is set before us, nor to contribute towards the cause of mankind. What charity can be greater, to what can there be stronger motives?

How many are there who thirst for military glory; and what sacrifices would they not make to obtain it! We have long been spectators of the great tragedy which has been acted on the theatre of Europe, and our imaginations have become inflamed. We have beheld mighty hosts encountering each other; desperate battles fought, and victories won. We think of the triumphant march, the blood stained banner, the captured artillery, and all the pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war, till many among us would willingly face danger and death itself, to acquire a renown equal to that of some favourite hero. Yet the laurel of the conqueror grows only in a soil which is moistened with blood. It is stained with the tears of the widow, and it thrives in the midst of desolation—Nor is it durable: amid all the annals of destruction, how few are the names which we remember and pronounce! But is there glory which is pure and enduring, and which deserves to be sought? Yes, the love of fame is a noble passion, given us not to be extinguished, but to be used aright. There is a glory which a wise man will covet, which a good man will aspire to, which will follow him from this world to the next, and there, in the presence of an assembled universe of angels, and of just men made perfect, place a crown upon his brows that faideth not away.

It is the peculiar province of the clergy, to teach how to acquire this heavenly crown; but I may be permitted to say, that an irrevocable decree has gone forth, an inviolable

promise has been made, that they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine like stars for ever and ever.

But how shall those who are doomed to business and labour, turn many to righteousness. Such is the constitution of human society, that all cannot be missionaries, all cannot apply themselves to the spiritual concerns of others. This Society enables all to contribute to the spiritual improvement of all. The Bible is the best of missionaries.—It will reach where no preacher can penetrate; it will preach where he cannot be heard; it will reprove, alarm, advise, console in solitude, when no passion interferes to drown its voice. Of these missionaries thousands may be sent abroad, and where the seed is abundantly sown, we may reasonably hope for an abundant harvest.

Though the diffusion of the scriptures is the great end of our Institution, yet another blessing will also spring from it. Too long have Christians been divided. Sect has been opposed to sect; angry controversies have agitated the church; misrepresentations have been made and believed; and good men, who ought to have loved each other, have been kept asunder by prejudices, which were the offspring of ignorance.

In this society, the most disor-

dant sects will meet together, engaged in a common cause; prejudices will abate; asperities will be softened; and when it is found, as undoubtedly it will be found, that the same love of God and of man animates all real Christians, whatever may be their outward rites, or forms of ecclesiastical discipline, that most of them agree in fundamental doctrines, and that their differences principally relate to points of little practical importance, there must be an increase of brotherly love, and of a truly catholick spirit.

Sir, I pretend not to see more clearly than others through the dim veil of prophecy, but if the predictions which foretel a millenial period of happiness on earth, are ever to be literally fulfilled, it can only be by the accomplishment of another prophecy, that "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." Let us then be blessed instruments in the diffusion of this knowledge, that having contributed to the triumph of the Redeemer's cause, we may be permitted to partake it. Then we shall be entitled to address the Christian Church in the exalting strains:

The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay;
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
But fixed his word, his saving power remains,
Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own Messiah reigns.

Extract from the Pastoral Address of the General Association of Massachusetts Proper.

Christian Friends and Brethren,

THE General Association of Massachusetts again take the liberty of addressing the churches and people in connexion with them. It demands our grateful recollection, that the year past has been a season of peace, of general health and prosperity, and, as we would hope and

believe, of moral and religious improvement.

The tremendous events of war among the nations, which long excited our astonishment, have passed away; passed away, we would devoutly hope, to return no more. Still, events, not less interesting, but infinitely more delightful, crowd

themselves upon our attention.—The great Missionary interest, so cheering to benevolent minds, seems to be extending its influence to all the villages and countries of the Christian world. The growing zeal and opulent means of Bible Societies give hopeful promise, that the word of God, at no distant period, may be read in all the languages of mankind. That the next generations of the world, and the great mass of the people, even in Christian nations, will become more enlightened and humanized, may be sanguinely anticipated from the multiplied and extending means of education, and the increasing attention to intellectual and moral culture. Nor do we hesitate to acknowledge, that from recent declarations, by some of the mighty Potentates of the world, we have been powerfully excited to hope, that those, who have been oppressors may ere long become the ministers of God for great good to his people. You perceive, that we refer to the "Holy League" formed by three of the powerful empires of Europe, Russia, Austria and Prussia—in which they recognize the Gospel of Jesus, as the basis of their alliance, and embrace each other as brethren. They, also, offer to receive all other powers, "who wish solemnly to profess the sacred principles which dictated that holy alliance." Nearly simultaneous with this great event, Peace societies were established in the capital of Massachusetts, and New-York, and (probably) in Great Britain, and all this without any previous concert or

correspondence. This is laying the axe to the root of the tree. Should Peace societies be extensively established, heroes and conquerors will no more be allowed to wade to thrones through the blood of their people; the silver trumpet of the Gospel will not be drowned in the clangour of war, nor the soldiers of the cross be driven from their pious labours by the legions of tyrants.—In connexion with these things, when we recollect the prophecies and promises of Divine Revelation, our faith almost rises to assurance, that the day makes haste, when wars shall cease, and all shall know the Lord. Should Peace societies be extended, they will be so many handmaids, or rather guardian angels of other benevolent institutions. Their establishment seems to be the commencement of a new era of hope and benevolence. One of the great purposes of the Gospel was, to produce peace on earth and good will to man. It has been devoutly expected, that in the process of ages, this would be the glorious result; hence ministers of the gospel, and other saints, have prayed, that "wars might cease, and the lion and lamb lie down together;" but this consummation, so devoutly to be wished, has never been permanently and extensively accomplished. But rulers and people are beginning to believe, that carrying desolation and murder over a country is not the most reasonable method to ensure peace or prosperity; no means seems so likely to produce universal peace, as the influence of such societies.

PEACE SOCIETY IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Extract of a letter from a friend near London, to a friend in New-York.

I UNITE cordially with thee, in hailing the many extraordinary symptoms of an awakened attention

to the highest interest of our species in various parts of the world. On the subject of war, a number not

of our fold, have associated for the purpose of disseminating Tracts, asserting its inconsistency with Christianity, and it began its labours by re-printing the "Solemn Review," of which several thousand copies are already circulated. I hope its author will be encouraged to persevere in his purpose of a quarterly publication, and would willingly subscribe for ten copies of it, if the means of conveying them in a private channel should present."

The above extract is given to establish the fact, which we have for sometime believed to be true,

that a Peace society did really exist in Great Britain; and to remove all apprehensions of danger from the exertions of the friends of peace in this country.

If we take into view the Holy League or Imperial Peace society, the accession of Sweden and Holland to that League, with what has been done in Great Britain and in the U. States within one year; may we not indulge a hope that the *renown of war* has passed the meridian, and that the time is at hand, when those who shall choose to fight, will be influenced by some other motive, than love of military fame.

ORDINATIONS.

Ordained, at Middletown, (Con.) July 24, Rev. Chauncey A. Goodrich. The parts were performed in the usual order, by Rev. Mr. Ripley of Meriden; Rev. Mr. Goodrich of Berlin.—Sermon from Heb. 13, 17—Rev. Dr. Lyman, East-Haddam; Rev. Mr. Selden of Chatham; Rev. Mr. Smith of Durham, and Rev. Mr. Merwin of New-Haven.

In North-Yarmouth, July 30th, Mr. Otis Briggs, over a Baptist Church in that place. Sermon, by Rev. T. Baldwin, D. D. of Boston, from Eph. iv. 17.

In Portland, July 31st, Mr. T. B. Ripley, over the Baptist Church, in that town. Introductory prayer and sermon by Dr. Baldwin.

Rev. Willard Preston, has been installed pastor of the Pacifick Congregational Church and society in Providence.

At St. John's church, in Providence, Aug. 1, Rev. G. T. Chapman was admitted to the order of

Deacon, by Rev. Dr. Griswold, Bishop of the Eastern Diocese. Sermon by the Bishop.

In New-York, Rev. J. T. Hull, and Rev. T. C. Brownell, Deacons, were admitted to the order of Priests, by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Hobart.

In Easthampton, Aug. 14, Rev. Asa Brooks, as a Missionary to the county of Randolph, Virginia, for one year, by the New-Hampshire Missionary society.—Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Packard of Shelburne.

At Beverly, Aug. 14, Rev. N. W. Williams, as pastor of the Baptist church in that place. Introductory prayer by Rev. Mr. Grafton, Newton; sermon by Rev. Dr. Baldwin; consecrating prayer, by Rev. Mr. Bachelor of Haverhill; charge, by Rev. Mr. Bolles, of Salem; right hand, by Rev. Mr. Chaplin of Danvers; concluding prayer by Rev. Mr. Collier, of Charlestown.